



Banff Springs Golf Course clubhouse.

The Clubhouse

The Perfect Fusion of Tradition and Design

“ . . . sited to take advantage of all views and vistas prevalent in that location, providing a celebrated sense of arrival without dominating the landscape . . . ”

—Robert LeBlond, architect

Offering sweeping river and mountain views, the Banff Springs Golf Course Clubhouse is a distinctive architectural structure in the heart of the course.

Upon completion of an ambitious refurbishment program at the Banff Springs Hotel in the mid-1980s, hotel manager Ivor Petrak turned his attention to the golf course and revived a concept that he had first visualized in the 1970s for a new clubhouse to replace the Tudor-style 1929 facility (now the Waldhaus Restaurant). In particular, the critical shortage of parking in the Bow Falls area for course patrons led Petrak to envision a site far removed from the congestion of the hotel environs. After a great deal of consideration and analysis, he picked out the site, a location between Mount Rundle and the Bow River between the old Thompson No. 5 and No. 14 holes.

Pat Woods, Petrak’s assistant during this period, recalls the staff building a move-

able platform at the approximate height of the proposed building’s main floor and moving it up and down the course. Petrak manned the top like a captain on the bridge until he picked out exactly the right location. CP Hotels’ considerable lobbying skills were brought to bear, and local Member of Parliament Gordon Taylor put his weight behind the project. He wrote to federal Minister of the Environment, Tom McMillan, and stated that “the Club House when completed will benefit a great number of tourists which the present golf course cannot accommodate and will provide the Park with a facility that it badly needs.” Although McMillan signed off with the expectation that Parks Canada would be able to give “full conceptual approval” shortly, it took time, and the official announcement of agreement did not come until the fall of 1987.

The architect hired was Calgary-based Robert LeBlond, of the LeBlond Partnership, who is also credited with designing the unique interpretive centre at Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump. Plans for the new clubhouse incorporated 360-degree panoramic views in a hexagonal shape around a floor-to-ceiling central fireplace—essentially emulating the form of a teepee. In LeBlond’s project description, he presented the new clubhouse as such:

. . . Sited to take advantage of all views and vistas prevalent in that location, providing a celebrated sense of arrival without dominating the landscape but as part of the landscape, the building was seen as a pebble that fell of the mountain, polite to it’s surrounding peace and tranquility. The tent like structure of glass, stones and green concrete tile roof is compatible with the



Clubhouse heritage display



The original clubhouse opened in 1911.

THE ORIGINAL CLUBHOUSE

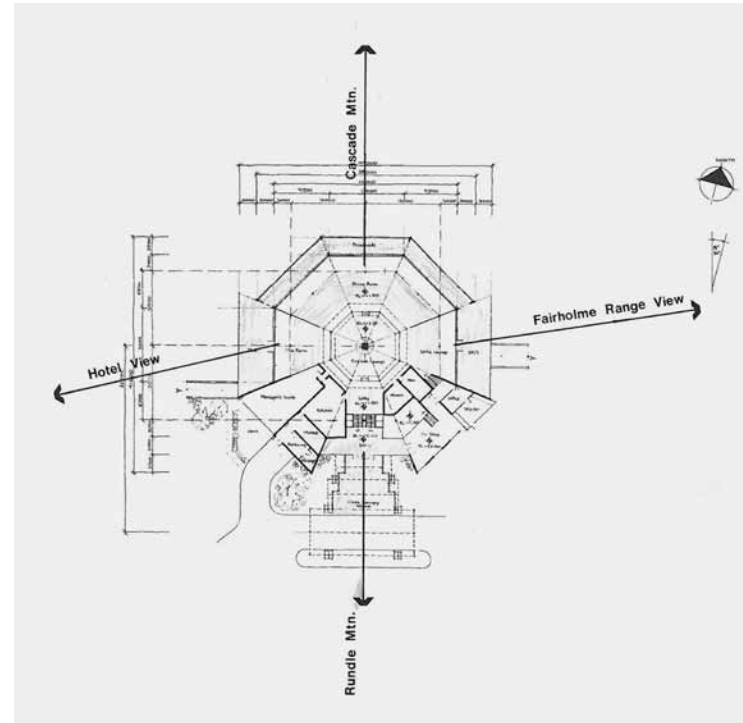
The original Banff Springs Golf Course clubhouse was completed soon after the course opened in 1911. It was a comfortable, modern-framed wooden building measuring six metres (20 feet) by 14 metres (45 feet) and set on a concrete and stone foundation. It consisted of a large, central, open “recreation room,” which was flanked on either side by men’s and women’s locker rooms. It was noted at the time that it boasted an up-to-date “complete lavatory system,” as well as a “lean to building” to house the course professional, Bill Thomson, and his wife Alice. For the convenience of the players, the clubhouse included a veranda supported on stone pillars, where Mrs. Thomson would “attend to afternoon teas.”

The building was used as a clubhouse until 1929, when the new Stanley Thompson course opened and the 1st tee was moved to below the Banff Springs Hotel. Backing onto the maintenance compound and mostly surrounded by mature trees, the building has been converted to a residence for the course superintendent. It is located between the 12th green and 13th tee and is marked by a plaque noting its historic significance.



The north façade is dominated by floor-to-ceiling windows and a wrap-around veranda.

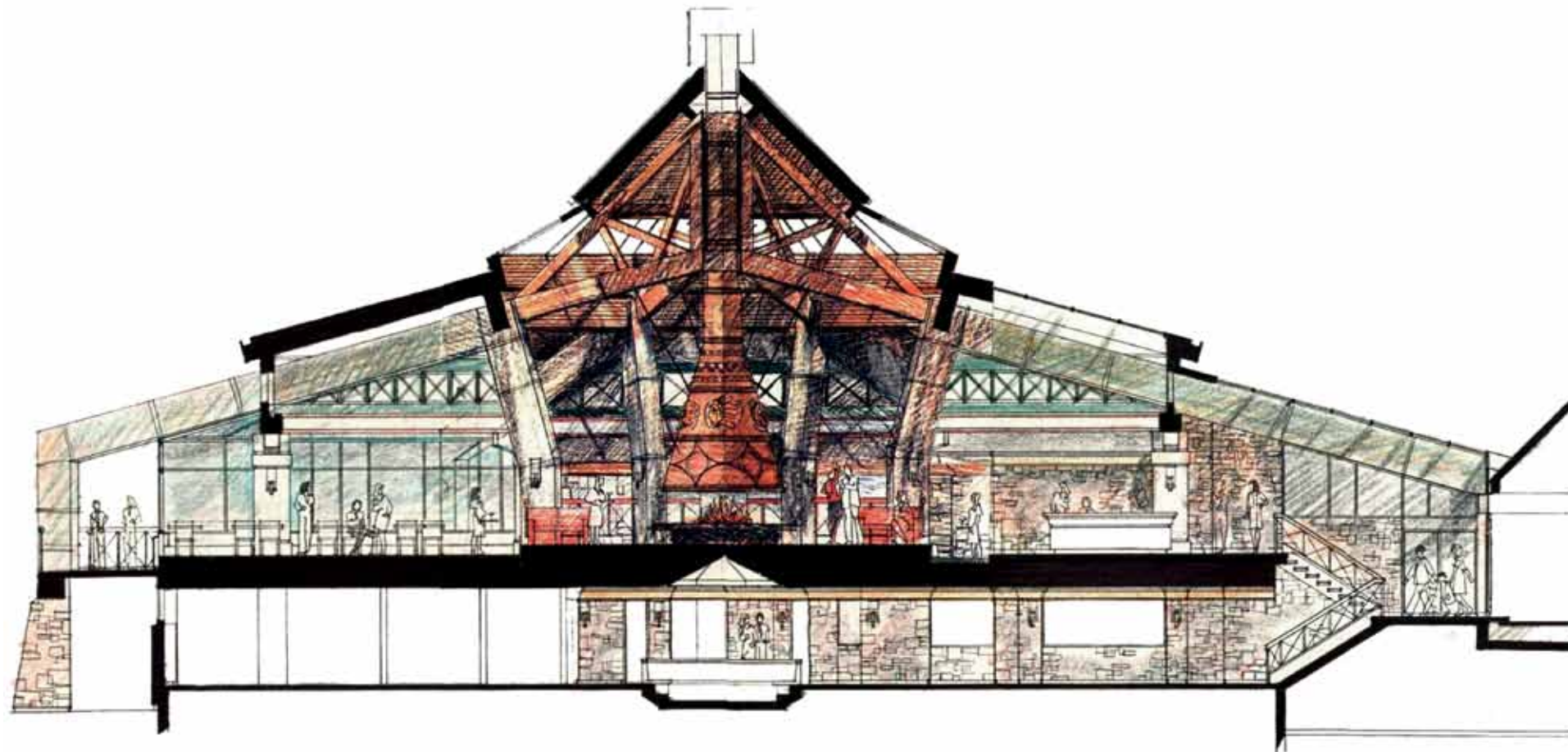
The Clubhouse



green mountain peaks surrounding the site without taking anything from them. The materials are animal friendly and compatible with the natural environment surrounding the golf course. The fireplace structure is reminiscent of an open fire pit in the wilderness of the park where you feel you could put your feet in it, providing a sense of being part of the exterior while in the comfort of the hotel.

Construction of the clubhouse began in the spring of 1988 and it was completed in May 1989, two months before the new Tunnel 9 opened. The building soon received its first tenant—Ivor Petrak, who had just been promoted to senior regional vice-president of CP Hotels and took up temporary residence while work was being finished on his new Banff home.

Robert LeBlond's drawings show how surrounding mountains influenced the design (left) while also depicting the unique shape of the clubhouse (below).



A Clubhouse Tour

After crossing the Spray River, Golf Course Road winds along the base of Mount Rundle and then runs alongside the 18th hole before rounding a final curve, from where the clubhouse comes into view. While the steeply pitched roof and natural tones fit perfectly into the setting, the structure is distinctive.

Through the front doors, a short flight of stairs leads to a landing and the heart of the clubhouse—a circular dining room anchored by a massive fireplace. Richly coloured carpeting, high ceilings, large windows, comfortable furnishings, and walls adorned with historic course photographs combine to create a welcoming yet relaxed ambience that encourages golfers and non-golfers alike to gather through the day and into the evening. But best of all, doors open to a wide concrete veranda dotted with outdoor table settings, where golfers add up their scores while recounting birdies made and wildlife encountered—all while soaking up the sweeping mountain panorama.

Golfers heading downstairs from the front doors to the men's and women's locker rooms pass glass cabinets filled with Banff Springs Golf Club trophies dating back to 1923, when the first men's club champion was crowned. To the right as you enter the clubhouse is the Stanley Thompson Heritage Golf Shoppe, filled with an array of clothing and equipment, and where golfers register for their tee times.



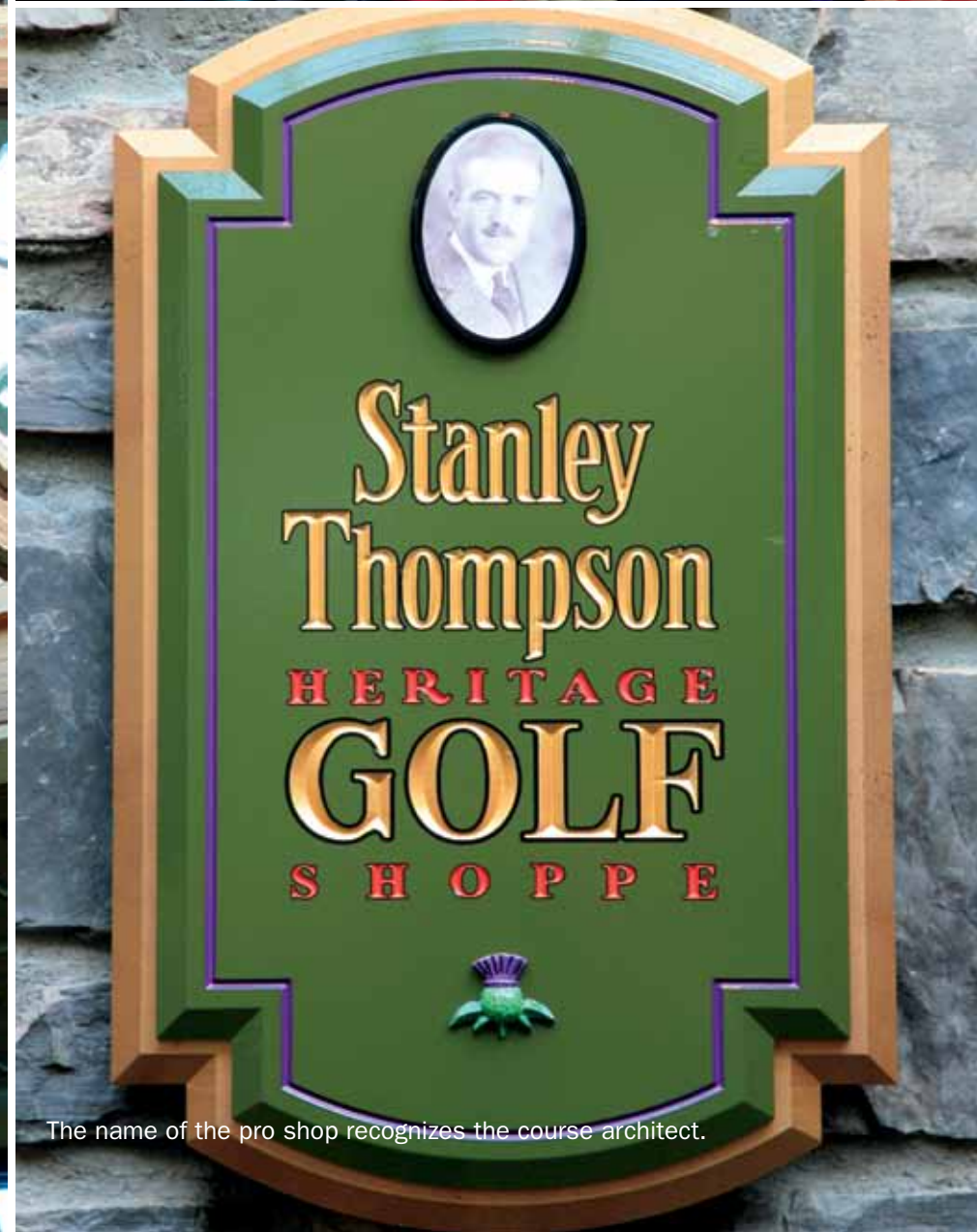
Clubhouse dining room.



The clubhouse interior is anchored by a massive fireplace.



Stanley Thompson Heritage Golf Shoppe.



The name of the pro shop recognizes the course architect.



Looking out across the practice facility from the clubhouse.